

Preparing for the
Tennessee
End-of-Course Assessment



Acknowledgment: Excerpt from "Listen to the Mockingbird" by Diane Porter, (www.birdwatching.com)
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Preparing for the End-of-Course Assessment Program

English I

Introduction

What is happening?

A testing program entitled Tennessee End-of-Course Assessment Program has been established to meet the Tennessee mandate for end-of-course assessments in Tennessee secondary schools. The Tennessee State Department of Education has implemented this system of assessment in several high school classes, with English I starting in the 2002–2003 school year. The sample questions in this pamphlet are representative of the item types and item formats that will be used in the actual test.

What are the questions testing?

The questions assess the content standards covered by each course as described in the performance indicators developed by the Tennessee State Department of Education and listed on their Web site.

Who will be tested?

All students taking English I will be tested. Tests may be given midyear for block schedules or at the end of the year.

How many questions are there?

Each test contains 60 multiple-choice questions.

How long will the tests take?

Students will have ample time to read and answer each of the questions. Each test will take approximately 90 minutes to complete.

How will the tests be scored?

The answers to the multiple-choice questions will be scored by machine. The test gives information about how well students understand the course content.

How do I use these sample questions?

The questions in the pamphlet are, for the most part, representative samples of the types of questions that will be on the English I test. The English I test typically contains a poem; however, this pamphlet does not contain one. The questions are presented in a format similar to that which will be used in the actual test.

Reporting Categories have been provided for the questions in this pamphlet only. These Reporting Categories group the English I Performance Indicators together. When students receive their reports from the test, these Reporting Categories will be used to report scores on student performance. The questions in the actual test will not have this identifying information.

These questions can be used for a classroom learning session or as an individual, short practice test to prepare students for the actual test. Various item formats have been selected in order to familiarize students with the actual test format.

An answer key for the sample questions is provided at the end of this pamphlet.

What tips are there for taking the test?

RELAX: It is normal to be somewhat nervous before the test. Remember that the score is only one of a number of measures of your performance.

LISTEN: Listen to and read the test directions carefully. Ask for an explanation of the directions if you do not understand them. Follow the directions.

PLAN YOUR TIME: Do not spend too much time on any one question. If a question seems to take too long, skip it and return to it later if you have extra time. First answer all the questions you are sure about.

THINK: If you are not sure how to answer a question, read it again and try your best to answer the question. Rule out answer choices that you know are incorrect and choose from those that remain.

Directions

Read this passage about bird songs. Then do Numbers 1 through 7.

How I Learned to Survive Nighttime Bird Songs

by Diane Porter

I learned this secret many years ago, when my husband and I first moved to Iowa. We went camping in the woods. At dusk, as Michael and I sat watching our campfire, the whippoorwills began to sing. Repeatedly, once every second, they chanted their name.

Whippoorwill!

It was charming at first, and I was pleased to discover a bird that was new to me.

Whippoorwill! Whippoorwill!

The evening grew darker, the fire subsided to coals, and Michael and I went to bed. We were ready to go to sleep. The whippoorwills were not. A whippoorwill easily performs 1,000 renditions without a pause. They sang on and on.

Whippoorwill! Whippoorwill! Whippoorwill!

The song was beautiful, but loud, and close, and I wondered if it would ever stop. However, it didn't seem to bother Michael. Impossible though it seemed, he was sound asleep. I turned over. I tried readjusting my blanket. I punched my pillow into various shapes. I felt as if one of the birds were trying to find out how near to me it could get before I reached over and grabbed it in the darkness.

It became apparent that sleep was not going to come, and eventually I gave up trying. I lay in the darkness and watched the stars and listened to the whippoorwills. And gradually something remarkable happened: after I stopped trying to will it away, the song began to reveal itself to me.

I noticed textures—burriness, purrs, and accents, subtle ripples upon the larger waves of sound. The birds did seem to be singing their name, but “Whippoorwill” was only a crude representation of the cadence¹. I discovered that the middle syllable was slightly doubled. “Whip-**poorer**-will, whip-**poorer**-will.” The counterpoint² of several voices made shifting moiré³ patterns of sound.

After a while the chant began to soothe, like an ancient lullaby. Tree frogs thrummed a steady background, and a couple of barred owls broke in now and again with their baritone hooting.

It wasn't long before I began to drift, as if I were floating in the sound, and then to doze. Once I woke while it was still night and found that the whippoorwills had fallen silent. I rather missed them. But soon they raised their voices again and lulled me deeper into their song, and off again to sleep.

It was years before I actually saw a whippoorwill. They are seldom found in the daytime, because they have the coloration of a handful of dead leaves, and they spend their days on the leaf-strewn forest floor, where they are perfectly camouflaged. But ever since that night I have regarded the whippoorwill as a particular favorite and personal friend.

¹**cadence:** rhythmical pattern

²**counterpoint:** a repeating and overlapping melody

³**moiré:** having a wavy or rippled pattern

1 What is the theme of this passage?

- A** Nature holds many mysteries.
- B** Humans need relaxing activities.
- C** One can learn lessons from nature.
- D** All bird songs are beautiful in the dark.

2 The author reveals herself to the reader by describing her own

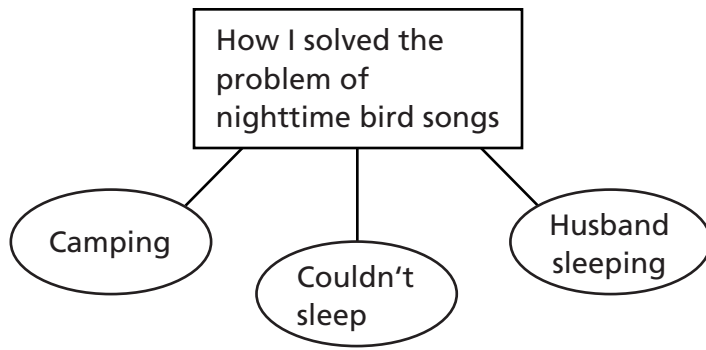
- F** actions
- G** thoughts
- H** conversations
- J** physical characteristics

3 What is the author's point of view?

- A** first person
- B** second person
- C** third person limited
- D** third person omniscient

4 What is the main idea of the passage?

- F** Understanding nature is difficult.
- G** Nature's sounds can be annoying.
- H** Accepting nature leads to harmony.
- J** Nighttime is the best time to experience nature.



5 Which stage of the writing process does this represent?

- A** revising
- B** first draft
- C** prewriting
- D** publishing

6 Read this paragraph from a student paper.

(1) The whippoorwill is known to fly only at dusk; during the day the bird rests on the forest floor. (2) Its colors are the same as dead brown leaves, so it is well camouflaged. (3) The whippoorwill prefers to stay in the woods near fields and can easily detect intruders. (4) Without its song the whippoorwill would be a difficult bird to spot.

What is the topic sentence of this paragraph?

- F** 1
- G** 2
- H** 3
- J** 4

7 Choose the sentence that uses correct pronoun/antecedent agreement.

- A** James or Marcus will give their speech first.
- B** Neither Heather nor Kimberly completed her homework.
- C** It is easy to succeed when you are led by someone like them.
- D** Following the recycling rules allows each person to help their town.

Directions

Amber wrote this essay about a day at the beach with her dog, Lexi, and her brother, Mark. There are several mistakes in her essay. Read the essay. Then do Numbers 8 through 12.

Simple Devotion

- 1** Despite the chill in the air and the roughness of the water, Lexi swims far out into the lake, her purpose clear. She worries that her young charges' lives are in danger. Satisfied that they are just playing, she turns and stoically paddles back, regains her footing in the shallows, and trots ashore. Now she races furiously up and down the beach, scattering birds here and there, alarming them with her sounds of playful happiness.
- 2** I pause in my activities, deciding to observe the tireless antics of our golden lab. She seems really happy. When I compare her to other puppies, Lexi appears calmer than them. Poodles, for instance, are very nervous dogs.
- 3** She sniffs the rocks, the sand, the water. A speedboat catches her attention; an empty canoe demands investigation. Pieces of driftwood interest her, if only for a second. She follows us wherever we go, pacing back and forth from one of us to the other. Just as she lies down to relax, my brother jumps into the water with a loud Tarzan yell and a gigantic splash. In no time, Lexi is up, eyes focused on Mark, vigilant as ever.
- 4** I marvel at her undying devotion, her pure selflessness, her love for us. A pat on the head, a scratch behind the ear, and a kind word satisfy her, and start her tail wagging. Although she depends on us for food, shelter, and companionship. Lexi is never judgmental or critical. She loves us unconditionally. In observing her behavior today. I realize her simple life is one I envy. I wonder if I ever will be as content as she, content to exist for the love of a family.

8 Which of these would be the best alternate title for Amber’s essay?

- F** Vacation Times
- G** To Love a Family
- H** Saving the Children
- J** The Kindness of Dogs

9 Read this part of Amber’s essay.

“In observing her behavior today, I realize her simple life is one I envy.”

What is the best way to write the underlined section to correct the sentence fragment?

- A** today I realize
- B** today, I realize
- C** today; I realize
- D** today; and I realize

10 Read Paragraph 2 of Amber’s essay.

“ (1) I pause in my activities, deciding to observe the tireless antics of our golden lab. (2) She seems really happy. (3) When I compare her to other puppies, Lexi appears calmer than them. (4) Poodles, for instance, are very nervous dogs.”

Which sentence does not need to be in this paragraph?

- F** 1
- G** 2
- H** 3
- J** 4

11 Which sentence uses effect or affect correctly?

- A** Your story effected me deeply.
- B** Rain effects the flowers in my garden.
- C** His excellent paper affected his grade.
- D** Sunlight has a direct affect on plant growth.

12 Read this sentence from Amber's essay.

"Just as she lies down to relax, my brother jumps into the water with a loud Tarzan yell and a gigantic splash."

Select a more vivid verb to replace the underlined one.

- F** dives
- G** leaps
- H** disappears
- J** plunges

Answer Key

Item Number	Correct Answer
1	C
2	G
3	A
4	H
5	C
6	J
7	B
8	G
9	B
10	J
11	C
12	J

Reporting Categories

Item	Reporting Category
1	5- Meaning
2	6- Technique
3	6- Technique
4	5-Meaning
5	4- Organization
6	4-Organization
7	1-Grammar Conventions
8	2-Content
9	1-Grammar Conventions
10	2-Content
11	3-Word Choice
12	3-Word Choice